

And Learned

SERMON

Preached in

LONDON;

By a most Worthy and Faithful
Minister of Christ.

For the great Support and Comfort
of the People of God in Evil Times,

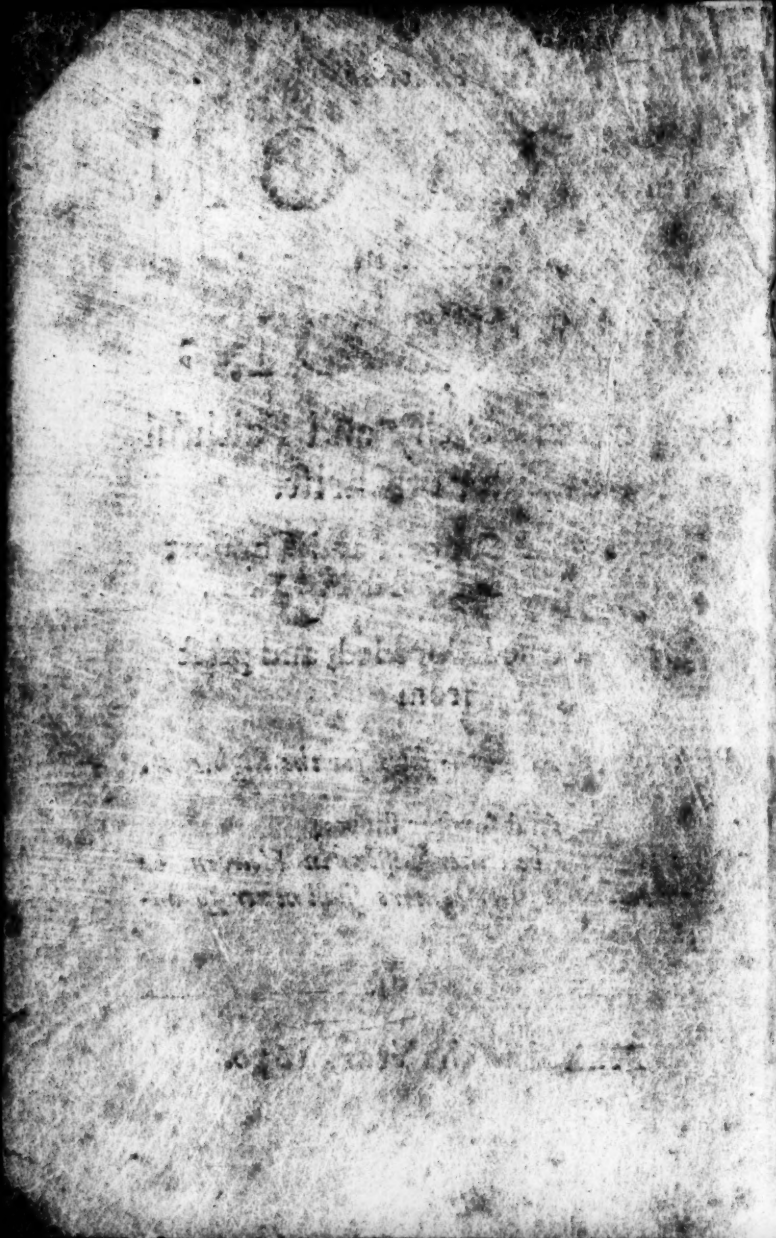
Most Learnedly opened, and prest
from

PSAL. 97. 11. *Light is shewn for the Righteous.*

And farther shews;

*- That if there be either Justice in Heaven, or
Justice in Hell, Persecutors shall never go im-
punished.*

Printed in the Year, 1670.



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SERMON

Preached

One Fast Day, *L O N D O N*.

In the Year, One thousand six hundred and Seventy.

Psalms 97. v. II.

Light is shewn for the Righteous.

THis Psalm is very consolatory, full of comfort for the Church of God: It is written in an Elegant and Majestick stile. The Psalm begins thus; *The Lord Reigns let the Earth rejoyce. God hath a Superintendency over all*

humane affairs, he doth what he will : It is God that sits Lord paramount, he hath a Negative Voice in the Counsel of men, *The Lord Reigns*, therefore, let the Earth rejoyce : *Clouds and darkness are round about him : Righteousness and Judgements are the habitation of his Throne.* As if the Psalmist had said, The Providences of the great God, they are very dark and mysterious, we cannot see what he is doing, *Clouds and Darkness are round about him* ; but his wayes though they are dark, they are alwayes holy and wise, they are alwayes Righteous, *Righteousness and Judgement are the habitation of his Throne.* And so I proceed unto the words I have read, having given this short preface, *Light is sown for the Righteous.* Let things go how they will, let Providence be never so dark and bloudy, here is the Saint's comfort : God reigns, and he will have a care of his People, and will comfort them in the most dismal times ; *Light is sown for the Righteous* ; which Text

is like *Israels Pillar of Fire* in the Wilderness which did give them light. It is like the *Mariners lanthorn*, which gives light in a dark night : whether it be a dark night now, I leave it to you to judge: Here is the *Marriners Lanthorn* to give light to you in a dark night. *Light is sown for the Righteous*. Light, it is here a Metaphor, that is put here for comfort, because Light, when it breaks out it gives abundance of comfort and chearing to the Spirit, as in Scripture Darknels is put for afflictions, *Joel 2. 2. A Day of Darkness and Gloominess*; that is, a day of afflictions; why so, Light is put for comfort and for joy: *Ester 8. 16. The Jews*, they had light, and gladness and joy, so that here see by light in the Text, is meant comfort. *Comfort is sown for the Righteous*; it is sown, you know that sowing prepares the earth for harvest. *Light is sown*: that is, joy, and peace, and comfort: it is preparing; the seed is in the ground: *Light is sown*, and who is this

seed of comfort sown for? why in these words, *for the Righteous*; the wicked, they have nothing to do with comfort. Those that do sow in sin, shall be sure to reap in sorrow. Job 4. 8. *Even as I have seen those that plough iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.* Oh, they will have a sad harvest at last! but saith the Text, *Light is sown for the Righteous*, for the Godly, for those in whose Spirit there is no guile. By righteous, I understand such that are really holy upright Christians: God esteems them righteous, who have Christs merits imputed to them, and Christs Spirit imparted to them: the Righteous in the Text, they are such as are upright, sincerely holy, so it is in the next words, *Light is sown for the Righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.* These are upright ones in whose Spirit there is no guile.

In this Text then there are two things observable. *First*, Here is something imployed, *Light is sown*; it im-
plies

plies this, that the comforts of Gods people may be for a time, *like the seed hid under ground*; that is implied clearly.

Secondly, Here is something exprest, *Light is sown*: There is this expression, though the comforts of Gods people are for a time hid, yet a seed of comfort still remains, *Light is sown for them*. I shall begin with the first of these; that which is implied in the Text: That the comforts of Gods people are often times hid, *as the seed under ground*. They have not that visible appearance of their comforts; sometimes they are hid, *as the seed under ground*. Now this I shall clear to you in a double sence.

First, Their outward comforts may be hid.

Secondly, Their Soul comforts, they may be hid for a time; *as seed under ground*: under the clodds.

First, The Saints outward comforts may be hid under sickness, their liber-

ty may be hid under restraint, their names maybe hid under reproach; thus their outward comforts may be hid.

Secondly, The spiritual comforts of the Godly, they may be hid for a time, as the seed under the clodds: the Lord may conceal the evidence of his love; the Lord though he hath the heart of a Father, may have the look of an Enemy, *Job 6.4. The Arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poyson whereof drinks up my spirit*: he speaks there of dissension; *the Arrows of the Almighty are within me. God hath wounded me*. It ecludes to the *Persians*, who in their War, did dip the point of their Arrows in Poyson, to make them wound more mortally. So saith *Job, The Lord hath shot his poysonsome Arrows, and hath wounded me with it*, the arrow of dissension: thus you see the spiritual comforts of the Saints, they may be sometimes hid from them.

But why does the Lord do thus? truly no wonder that the spiritual comforts of believers may be hid, as the
seed

seed under ground. No, comfort and they may be in dissection ; for,

First, The Saints comforts are no better than Christs comforts were ; but Christs comforts were hid for a time, when he was in dissection, and cryed out, *My God, my God* ; he was without comfort ; and shall we wonder if God eclipse our comfort, and we walk in the dark ? did not Christ do so ? our comforts are no better than Christs comforts were.

Secondly, The Saints comforts are no better than their graces are, but the graces of the Saints may sometimes be hid, why then may not their comforts ? their graces we see are often hid under much corruption, as Gold is hid under dross ; their faith is hid under much unbelief ; their humility is hid under much pride ; their love to Christ is hid under much love of the world : How did *David* here suffer an eclipse ? why now the Saints comforts are no better than their graces are ; if their graces be hid, why may not their comforts be hid too ?

Third-

Thirdly, The Saints Crown that is hid, their comforts are no better than their Crown is; but their Crown is hid, why may not their Comforts. A Crown is laid up, hid out of sight, 2 Tim. 4. 8. *A Crown laid up for me:* a Believers Crown, it is hid from the eyes of the world: the world sees the Saints sufferings, but doth not see their crown: and the Saints Crown is hid from their own eyes too for a while, 1 Joh. 3. 2. It does not yet appear what we shall be, our happiness that we hope for, it is hid out of sight: why, if our crown be hid, why may not our comforts be hid? they are not better than our crown is? But you will say unto me, but why does the Lord thus hide the comforts of his people? does he intend to bury them? I answer, no: the Lord is all this while carrying on a design of mercy and love to the Saints. Pray observe, 1st. God hath a design in hiding their temporal comforts from them, & withdrawing them.

Second-

Secondly, God hath a design in the hiding the Saints spiritual comforts, and withdrawing them.

1. The Lord hath a design in hiding the temporal comforts of his people; God does it for this great end, that he may lessen and unglew their hearts from the world. We oft let the world have too great a share in our love. It is a very hard thing to enjoy any temporal mercy, and not make an Idol of it; and therefore the Lord in wisdom and love, hides and withdraws those comforts of the world from us. As, suppose that a husband were beyond the Sea, and he should send his Wife a Jewel, and she should be so taken with the Jewel, as quite to forget her husband: was it not time for him to send home for the Jewel again, that she might love him more: So it is here: the Lord enricheth you with temporal mercies, health, and estate, sends you these Jewels; you are apt to fall in love with these Jewels, and forget God that sent them.

them. It is time for God to call home for those Jewels, that he might have more of your love.

Secondly, God hath a design in hiding, and withdrawing the spiritual comforts of his People ; their spiritual comforts, as,

First, Perhaps God sees that they cannot bear comfort : comfort is not for all, it is like strong Waters that break the Glass : Joys are strong things, all cannot bear it, no more than a weak eye can bear the Sun. When *Peter* was upon the Mount of Transfiguration, the glory of Heaven began a little to shine in his eyes, he was transported, and said, he knew not what those sugared joyes of Heaven were: they are so sweet and ravishing, that some have tasted of them and have died, they have not been able to bear them; therefore God hides and withdraws them : all cannot bear comfort.

Secondly, God may hide those spiritual comforts from Believers, for a time, that they may value them the more when they have them. Oh, brethren ! Did we come by our comforts easily, as Water at the first pumping, we should begin to disesteem, and vilifie our comforts ; that is our nature. Though *Manna* was Angels food, when it grew common, it was slighted, it was disesteemed : *What is this Manna, and who is this Moses ?* they began to slight the *Manna*. When Pearls grew common at *Rome*, they slighted them, and wore them upon their shoes ; so would we do with our spiritual comforts : therefore God, to inhaunce, and raise the price of our spiritual comforts, he does for a time suspend them ; hides them, as the seed under ground.

Thirdly, God may hide the spiritual comforts of his Children, for trial ; he will try their ingenuity, he will see what metal they are made of,
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whether they will serve him for himself, and not for comfort only. It is a harlots love, to love the Husband's money and tokens more than his person. Such as serve God onely for Comforts, they serve God more for his gifts than for himself. We do dislike such as will do nothing for us without a Fee; God likes not those Christians, who will serve him onely when he sees, and bribes them with Comfort.

Fourthly, God hides his peoples spiritual comfort, that he may quicken the exercise of their Grace. Many times Grace is strong, when Comforts are weak; Grace is at full-tide, when Comforts are but at a low ebb, *Jenah* 2. 4. *I said I was cast out of thy sight.* There he had no comfort, *yet will I look again to thy holy Temple.* There was a strong Faith. Faith and Love, like two stars, shine brightest in the darkest night. In the night of desertion, we are taken with Comfort, but
God

God is more taken with the using of our Grace. The truth of it is, when God sometimes gives his people spiritual comfort, why then they are apt to be more remiss in their walking, and they are not so quick and lively in duty as they were; just like Musicians, as soon as you throw them down money out of the window, they will leave off playing, you will hear no more Musick. The Lord with-holds comforts from his people sometimes, because he loves to hear the musick of their Graces.

Fifthly, God hides the Spiritual comfort of the Saints for a time, that they may be more humble; there is nothing the Saints are more apt to be proud of, than spiritual comforts, and enlargement; because they look upon those things as most excellent, & therefore their hearts are apt to be lifted up. Now when God takes away those comforts, and hides them, their hearts begin to be more humble. *St. Pauls* danger was, in being lifted up, when he had

had so many Visions and Revelations. Therefore he had a Thorn in his flesh to humble him. It was an humbling Thorne. 2 Cor. 10. 12. *Least that I should be exalted above measure, thou hast given me a Thorn in the Flesh.* When Christians have much joy in their Spirits, they need a thorn in the flesh, to humble them. It is a very hard thing, to be high in joy, and to be low in humility. Oh, what corruption is there in mans heart? God cannot humble a Soul but it grows dejected; and God cannot comfort him, but he is ready to grow proud: and therefore he is forced sometimes, to withdraw spiritual comforts, & hide them, *as seed under ground.* God had rather you should want comfort, than that you should be proud with your comforts.

Sixthly, The Lord sometimes hides the spiritual comforts of his people, and they walk in the dark, and see no light, that they may long the more to be in Heaven: then their comforts shall be

in perfection, and shall never cease; then the Saints they shall be upon the Mount of *Vision*, seeing Gods glory ever, and shall never complain more.

My beloved hath withdrawn himself. In Heaven, they shall have nothing but comfort then; because they have nothing but grace. The Saints they shall be for ever sunning themselves in the light of Gods countenance. Oh, blessed time! Believers, they shall never have an angry word from God more; they shall never see a frown in his face more: the Sun-light of Gods favour will be without clouds, and will never set; and therefore God lets our comforts be hid, *as seed under ground*; that we may long for a Spring-time of glory; when the flowers of spiritual Joy shall be fully ripe, and blown, we shall have comfort, and nothing but comfort. There shall be no more weeping then in Heaven, ^{there} there shall be joy in Hell. Now to make some Application of this.

Use. Then, if we see not Spiritual

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joy rising suddenly in our hearts, let us not wonder ; you see God hath a design of love and mercy to his People, who hides Spiritual comforts. If God pleased, he could presently let out the Sun-light of his face ; he could presently give us joy ; but he sees it better sometimes to be without it, than have it : the Sun dulls the fuel, and puts it out. The Sun-shine of comfort, makes the fervour of grace abate. Note therefore, God hides the spiritual comforts of his Saints, *like seed under ground* : He is all this while carrying on a design of mercy, and love to them. To come to the next : this thing is implied in the Text : Comfort may be hid as seed, *as seed under clods.*

Secondly, I come to that which is express'd here in the Text : Though the comforts of Believers are for a time hid out of sight, *as seed under ground* : why, yet still a seed of comfort remains for the godly : that is express'd in the Text. Light, that is, Comfort is sown for the righteous ; though comfort is hid

hid for a time, yet there is a seed of comfort still remaining for all the righteous: this is, methinks, like a brest of consolation: do but lay your faith to this brest, and you may suck out comfort. This is the observation.

The Doctrine is this;

That in the midst of all tryals and discomforts of the godly, still there is a seed of comfort left for them, *Light is sown for the Righteous.* Psal. 18. 28. *For thou wilt light my Candle:* as if David had said, though at present all my comforts they seem to be blown out: why, yet the Lord will light my Candle: *Light is sown for the Righteous.* Why, now you will say, Why will the Lord, in great trials of his people, preserve a seed of comfort for them: *Light is sown for them.* I answer, God does it for this end, that he may sweeten Religion to them: if nothing were to be seen but sorrow and trouble; nothing but the dark side of the cloud, and there were no intervals, it would imbitter Religion: It would

cast a prejudice upon the ways of God; and therefore the Lord, that he may shew you the beauty and pleasantness in Religion, he does chequer his work, and preserve some seeds of comfort in the worst of times: this sweetens Religion, *Light is sown for the Righteous*. Now, to illustrate this proposition, to clear it to you, in case the Lord does preserve alive seeds of comfort for his people.

28 *First*, In their outward comfort.

29 *Secondly*, In their spiritual agony and disquiet, God preserves a seed of comfort for his people.

1. In their outward trouble, in persecutions, in sufferings: why, now God preserves seeds of comfort; there are two seeds of comfort sown for the righteous, in time of Persecution.

1. The Promises are seeds of comfort in Persecutions. There is no promise made to prosperity, but abundance of promises made to persecution; & these promises are seeds of comfort sown for the Righteous. I will only instance in these four promises.

First,

First, God hath promised, that he will moderate the fury of his Enemies: he will, in the day of the Rough wind, stay the East wind: God will blunt the edge of their Razor, when their Spirits are sharpened against the Righteous: God will blunt the edge, he will moderate the stroke. *Psal. 76. 10. The remainder of wrath thou shalt restrain.* That promise is a seed of Comfort.

Secondly, The Lord hath promised, that he will sanctifie our Afflictions, and Persecutions to us, they shall do us good. *Jer. 24. 5. They shall be carried captive, but it is for their good, to make them holy, brightning their graces, fitting them for glory: fiery trials make good Christians.*

Thirdly, Promise in Persecution is this, that God will proportion his strength to our tryal: and this promise is a seed of comfort. *Psal. 7. 39. He is their strength in the time of trouble: either God will lighten our burthens, or will strengthen our faith.*

Fourthly, Another promise is this, in

Persecution, that God will in his time open the door of deliverance for his People: when the Rod of the Persecutor hath done its work, when it hath humbled, and purified the Saints, God he can soon throw away the Rod. 1 Cor. 10. 13. *He will with the temptation, make a way to escape.* Never was Gold-smith more curious to observe when the Gold is thorough-refined, to take it out of the furnace, than God is to watch the first season, when his People are fit for deliverance, then he will take his gold out of the furnace. Why, these promises are great seeds of comfort in an hour of Persecution.

Secondly, As the promises are seeds of comforts, so Persecution it self does carry in it seeds of comfort for the godly, these two wayes. Persecution it self hath seeds of comfort in it, two wayes.

First, Persecution ripens the sin of the Enemy, and as their sin doth ripen, so the godlys deliverance does hasten.

Second;

Secondly, Persecutions have seeds of comfort in them: as they are a means to distil comfort into the Soul: The Saints have joy out of sorrow, as Sampson had honey out of the Lion. *John 16. 20. You shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy: by the very Persecution, God will let in more joy into the Soul: your sorrow, saith Christ, shall be turned into joy: here is water turned into wine. The Soul hath never so much of God, as in an hour of affliction: this made Paul to glory in tribulations, and as a Bird, to sing in Winter. 2 Cor. 7. 4. Thus, you see, the Saints very persecutions do carry in them seeds of comfort for them. Light is sown for the Righteous.*

Secondly, The inward Agony of the Soul, and discession: still God preserves a seed of comfort in the Soul; *Light is sown for the Righteous.* When God hides his face from his people, looks like an enemy, draws a curtain between him and his people; why, yet all this while, in this agony,

there is some seed of comfort left in the Soul. But you will say, what seeds are here? These two.

1. This is a seed of comfort in dissension, that God is still a God in Covenant, there is a seed of comfort. Though the Lord may forsake us in regard of Vision, he will never forsake us in regard of Union. The Covenant relation, the Marriage relation still holds, that is a seed of comfort. A Husband, he may be gone a long Voyage, he may be a thousand Leagues off from his Wife; Oh, but still the Marriage relation holds between them; God may be gone, dissent the Soul, but still the Marriage knot is bound, God is a God in Covenant. *Isa. 55. 53. I will make an everlasting Covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.* Beloved, Gods truth is the richest Jewel of his Crown, and he hath laid this Jewel to pawn, in the Covenant; he hath promised, he hath sworn it, *he will be our God eternally.* Though it is true, we forfeit the mercy of the Covenant, yet

yet God will not break the truth of the Covenant. *Psal. 89. 28. My Covenant shall stand fast.* The earth does not alwayes stand fast, that is shaken and removed, as in some Earth-quakes: Oh, but saith God, *My Covenant shall stand fast. Mat. 2. 16.* The God of Israel saith, that he hates putting away. God that would not have other men put away their Wives, do you think he will divorce his own Spouse? the Lord hates putting away. Here is seeds of comfort in differtion.

Secondly, In differtion, in a Spiritual Agony: why, now grace is a seed of comfort, the tree may be without blossom, and without fruit, but still it is alive, there is sap in the root of the tree; there may be vital sap, and grace in the heart, though fruit of joy and assurance be not seen.

But a differted soul will ask me this question, when grace appears now in an hour of differtion, to be a seed of Joy, and a seed of comfort? I answer.

First,

First, The Soul mourns for Gods absence, that shews grace. It is a sign love is in thy heart, else thou wouldest not Mourn for Gods absence. When the Sun is gone, the dew falls; when God withdraws from the Soul, why then the dew of tears that drops from the eye, (*David* felt this mourning, lamenting Gods absence) that is a sign of grace in the heart.

Secondly, When the Lord hath left thee in dissection, a Christian hath quite lost his taste to all worldly comforts, like one in a Fever, every thing tastes bitter, he takes content in nothing, so long as he cannot enjoy God. As *Job* speaks, I may clude to it, *I went mourning without the Sun*: so a poor disordered Christian, I go mourning up and down without the Sun; God gives me some Star-light, some worldly comfort: what is all this? still in a night of dissection. *I went mourning without the Sun, I cannot see Christs face, the Son of Righteousness doth*

doth not shine. Is not this a seed of grace? the Soul hath lost its taste to all worldly comfort; he cannot taste the sweetness in Friends, and estate, as he could do. 2 Sam. 14. 32. Saith Absolon, *Let me see the Kings face.* Oh, nothing will satisfie a poor distressed Soul, but to see the King of Heavens face, to see Gods smiling countenance: why, this shewes, that the Soul is deeply in love with God, and ready to faint away for him; this grace is a seed of comfort, in an hour of distress; thus you see *light is sown for the Righteous.* Both outward troubles, persecutions, inward agonies, distresses; thus you see, *light is sown for the Righteous:* seeds of comfort is still left in that Soul. Let me now come to make some Application; and the Lord give a blessing to it. Three several inferences I shall draw from this Doctrine.

1. See then from hence, my Brethren, the super-abundant goodness of the Lord to his people, in the midst of all their sorrow and sufferings; still he preserves a seed of comfort for them: *light*

is sown for the Righteous. God does chequer his work with troubles; he does intermix comfort like a Limner, who mingles bright colours with dark shadows; I may elude to that Scripture, *Zac. 14. 7.* I do but elude to it. *It shall not be day nor night.* Neither day, nor night; the people of God, they have some afflictions, so that it is not day, yet they have some seed of comfort in their Souls, so that it is not night: *light is sown for them.* The condition of believers in this world is never so bad, but they may spie mercy in it, they may see some light, they may behold a *Rain-bow*, in the black cloud. *Psal. 148. 7.* *Though I walk in the borders of trouble, thou wilt revive me.* Joseph was in prison; there, he was in affliction, but the Lord was with Joseph; there was a seed of comfort. *Paul* had a thorn in the flesh, there was his trouble, but God said to him, *My grace shall be sufficient for thee;* there was a seed of comfort. In the *Ark*, there was laid up the Rod, and *Manna* together; truly in this life, Gods people,
 Gods

Gods suffering people, with the Rod, taste some *Manna*. Oh, the goodness of God, that never brings his people so low, but still reserves seeds of comfort for them, that they may not murmur, but rather praise him in their worst condition; that is the first inference.

Secondly, If it be Gods work, and his great design, to sow seeds of comforts for the Righteous; than what will we think of those, who are sowing seeds of sorrow for the Righteous? Surely these act directly against God, there is a woe belongs to them, that make the heart of the Righteous sad, whom God will not have made sad. *Ezek. 13. 22.* God is sowing light for his people, and these men are laying snares for them: God is powering in Wine and Oyl into his peoples wounds, and they powre in Vinegar: these act directly contrary to God, who still would preserve seeds of comfort for the Saints. We read in Scripture of Gods Bottle, & of his Bag; of Gods Bottle, *Psal. 56. 8.* and of his Bag, *Job 14. 17.* The Lord will put the tears

tears of his Saints in his bottle, and he will seal up the sins of the wicked in his bag: such as afflict the righteous, they strike at Christ through his Members sides: let them take heed, God is making his Bow and Arrows ready to shoot. *Psal. 7. 13. The Lord ordains his Arrows against the Persecutors.* Never did any persecutor thrive on that trade, but were broken at last. *Domaneer*, and others ran mad and poysoned themselves. *If there be either Justice in Heaven, or Fire in Hell, Persecutors shall never go unpunished.* That is the second.

Thirdly, See here the difference between the wicked and the godly. Oh, here is a great difference, the godly in all their sorrows have seeds of comfort sown for them. The wicked in all their comfort have seeds of sorrow sown for them: What are those seeds of sorrow, that are sown for the wicked? they are the threatnings of God. Here be seeds of sorrow, so long as the wicked and those seeds will come up, *Psal. 68. 21. God shall wound the head of his ene-*

enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one
that goeth on in trespasses. Why, this
threatning is a seed of sorrow, sown for
the wicked. Oh, it is a dreadful thing to
be in the number of the wicked, to be
of the Devils black-guard: the sinner
he lives every day in fear of arresting;
there remains for him, saith the Apo-
stle, a fearful looking for a Judgment,
and fiery indignation, *Heb. 10. 27.* A
wicked man, when he dies, he drops in-
to the grave, & into Hell both at once.
God is brewing for the sinner a deadly
cup; Oh, it will make him heart sick,
Psal. 57. 8. In the hand of the Lord,
there is a cup, the wine is red, it is full
of mixture; the dregs thereof, the wick-
ed of the earth shall drink them out:
this Wine is the wrath of God. It is
burnt wine, and this cup of wine is full
of mixture: what is that mixture in the
cup? the worm of Conscience, and the
fire of Hell, here is a mixed cup, and the
wicked shall be ever drinking of it: yea,
the very dregs: God will never say to
the damned in hell, *Let this cup pass a-*

way

way from you: Methinks this might damp a sinners mirth: there are seeds of sorrows. All the threatnings of God sown for the wicked. It was sad news the Devil brought to *Saul*, oh, it must needs be bad news, where the Devil is the messenger. 1 *Sam.* 28.19. Saith the Devil to *Saul*, *To morrow thou shalt be with me.* There are some sinners in *England*, that shall be with the Devil before to morrow. Here is a cooling Card for wicked men. There is seeds of sorrow, threatnings of God sown for the wicked; they will spring up in time.

Fourthly, If there be seeds of light and comfort sown for the Righteous; then when a child of God does not see the flower of comfort, let him rejoyce in the seed of grace; when he does not see the flower of comfort, yet let him rejoyce in the seed of grace; this seed will bring comfort in time.

Now a child of God will make this objection. Alas! I could take comfort, if I could find the seed of grace in my Soul: but I have such a deal of corruption,

ruption, that I fear, there are no seeds of grace left now. To this I answer. There may be seeds of corruption in the heart, where there are seeds of grace. The change, that grace makes in the Soul, is a real change, but it is not perfect: Doth not *Paul* complain of a *body of death*, *Rom. 7. 23.* He who hath most faith, had need pray, *Lord, help my unbelief.* Alas, our grace in this life, will be mixed with corruption: our wheat is mingled with chaff: our stars with clouds. The best Saint alive, is like *Jacob*, who, though he prevailed with God, yet he went haulting away: what pride was there in Christs own Disciples, when they were striving which of them could be greatest. *Luke 22. 24.* Christians look not for perfection here; God sees it is good that sin should be left in us a while, to keep our Souls humble. Gravel and dung may help to ballast the ship, that it overturns not. Oh! this dung of sin ballasteth a Soul, keeps it very low and humble: Say not therefore, thou hast no seed of grace, because thou hast seed of corruption. Let

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me ask thee this question ; Dost not thou mourn for thy sin ? Is not a proud, and a dead heart thy burthen ? Are not thy eyes a spiritual Limbeck, dropping holy tears for sin ? and dost not thou prize Christ ? couldst not thou be willing to part with all, for the Pearl of price ? and dost not thou maintain a combat with thy corruption ? why, that is a sign there is life of grace, else no combat. Dead men do not fight : Grace is seen as well in resisting sin, as in overcoming it. Why then, Christian, thou hast the seed of grace in thy Soul, be thankful for this grace, though thou hast not the seed flower of joy flourishing in thee. Why, look upon the Husbandman ; when the Husbandman hath sown the seed in the Field, he takes comfort in that seed sown, he knows there will be a crop e're long : So, Christian, if thou findest these seeds of grace sown in thy heart, take comfort, there will be a Crop of joy ere long in thy Soul. That is the fourth inference.

5th. Inference. If light and comfort be sown for the Righteous ; why then here
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is comfort this day for the Church of God in *England*; the seed is in the ground, and deliverance in Gods due season, shall spring up to the Church. Light is sown; what if I should say, *Light is sown for England*: I would revive your spirits in time of sadness and drooping. Let our faith get above our fear. *Psalm 138. 9. Rejoyce not against me, O mine enemy: though I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me.* It is the voice of the Church, Light is sown for the people of God, and the Church of God. I confess, things here amongst us, as they have a sad aspect at this day, I would be sensible of our condition. If we are not sensible of Gods hand, we cannot be humble under it. I would be sensible, gray hairs are here and there; sad symptoms of Gods displeasure are upon us: our sins grow higher, our trading grows lower; our divisions grow wider, and therefore our fears grow stronger. Oh! how many Judgments of God hath *England* felt of late years, for its sins; and yet we go on, as it were, in despite of Heaven:

We do at this day hang out a flag of De-
 fiance against the God of Heaven: & may
 we not yet fear, some other Judgments
 may yet ensue. Poor *England*, it is like the
 Ship in the *Gospel*, almost covered with
 waves. *England* lies a bleeding, with the
 wounds that her sins hath given her; God
 grant it be not a sickness unto death:
 yet, I say, in this day of Mourning, I
 would not have you mourn, as they with-
 out hope. These things may humble us,
 and set our eyes abroad with tears: yet
 mourn not, *as them without hope. I would*
come as the Dove, with an Olive leaf of peace
in my mouth, to you this day. My Text tells
 you, *Light is sown for the Righteous.* There
 is a little light, God knows, it is but very
 little light, we can scarce see it at the
 Key-hole; but there is some Light sown
 for the Righteous. There is three seeds
 of comfort, for this poor, dying, self-de-
 stroying Nation.

First, God hath a people in this Land
 that fears him, and are very dear to
 him: that is one seed of comfort; they
 are to him, as the apple of his eye;
 they

they are the glory of Christ, 2 Cor. 8. 23. As they are called, they are Gods Jewels, and all the rest of the world are but Lumber. God hath a people dear to him in *England*. The Lord would have spared *Sodom*, if there had been but ten Righteous Persons in it: it is to be hoped, there are many tens in *England*. Were the godly removed, as it is the desire of some, to give them their pass to be gone; why, God would soon make quick work with the Nation; he would soon break up house in *England*. Were it not for the Elect, he would soon sink Ship and Stage, but for some of the Elect Jewels in the Ship; but for their sakes, the Lord may relieve the Nation, and may adjourn its Funerals a while longer.

Secondly, Another seed of Comfort for the Land, is this, The mercies of God in Christ; that is a seed of comfort. The mercy of God in Christ. What cannot mercy do for a poor Nation? Mercy can throw forth a plank to us, when we are drowning. The Sun is not so full of light, as God is full of love.

Mercy, it is that which pleaseth God. *Mica 7. 18. Mercy pleaseth thee.* Why may we not hope that the Lord will do that which is so pleasing to him, that, which is his recreation, to shew mercy. Malice pleaseth the Wicked, but Mercy pleaseth God. Justice is called, *Gods strange work, Isa. 28. 21. A strange work.* As if the Lord were not used to it. We shall observe in the Scripture, when the Lord is going to shave off the pride of a people; he is said to hire the very Razor. *Isa. 7. 20.* As if he had none of his own, he was faine to hire one. When God executeth justice upon a people, he is said to come forth from his place to punish. *Isa. 26. 21.* The Bee doth naturally give honey; it stings only when it is provoked. God doth naturally shew mercy: Mercy, my brethren, it is Gods darling attribute, that he delights most of all to magnifie. Why, methinks this is a seed of comfort for *England.* Why may not mercy give the casting voice, to save this Nation? *Isa. 63. 9. In his love, and in his pity he redeemed them.* In his love and pi-
ty.

ty. Mercy does more overflow in God, than sin can in us, or we could never be pardoned.

Oh, but you will say, we are not a people that are fit for mercy: what should we do with mercy, that have so abused, and so provoked it? why, to this, I say, mercy hath healing in its wings. It can as well give a Nation repentance, as deliverance. It can as well prepare us for mercy, as bestow mercy. Mercy hath healing in its wings: why, that is a seed of comfort.

The third seed of comfort for the Land is this, That Spirit of Prayer, that is yet kept up among Gods people: Prayer ushers in deliverance. It is the Midwife that helps to deliver the Church, when she is in pangs. *Isa. 2. 32. whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved.*

The sparkling walls, were their spear walls: and the Bulwark of a Land is Prayer: Prayer it is a seed that is sown in the ears of God. Nay, in the heart of God. Prayer commands God. *Ps. 45. 11. Concerning the work of my hands, command*

ye me. That is, by Prayer, *Jacob's* Prayer held God, it held him fast. *Gen. 32. 26.* *I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.* I but pray observe observe, *Moses* Prayer seems to have more force and power in it, than *Jacob's* Prayer had, *Exod. 32. 10.* Saith God to *Moses*, *Let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them. And Moses sought the Lord, and the Lord repented of the evil.* Pray observe, *Jacob's* Prayer prevailed with God, when God had a mind to shew mercy: But *Moses* Prayer prevailed with God, when God was angry: so that, to speak with reverence, whether God be angry, or whether God be pleased: Prayer, why that prevails with him: this is a seed of comfort for this poor Nation. There are many, that every day besiege Heaven with Prayer; sends up whole volleys of sighs and groans to Heaven. *Psalm 106. 23.* Therefore he said, he would destroy them. Had not *Moses*, his servant, stood in the breach, to turn away his wrath from them. Prayer hath influence upon the Almighty. Prayer finds God free, but leaves him bound:

bound: especially Christ praying our prayers over again; and sprinkling them with his blood, makes them go up, as sweet incense to Heaven: so that these are seeds of comforts for this poor dying Nation. *Light is sown for England.*

But here I must insert a caution: and I beseech you to observe. Though there be some light sown for them, yet take this caution; Expect an hour of darkness. It is usually dark before morning. Things are like to be worse with us, before they are better: you know, the seed dies in the ground, before it springs up. Things seem to be in a dying condition; the seed is dying in the ground: e're light comes, expect some darknels.

It is Gods usual method, he ushers in deliverance, by great afflictions: he prepares for deliverance by afflictions: he brings his people into the *wilderness*, and then he speaks comfortably unto them, *Hos. 2. 14.* Shall I give you some Scripture instances? There will be some darknels before light do spring up: some Scripture
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instances to clear it up. God gave David a promise of a Kingdom; *David shall wear the Crown*; I, but before that, *David must fly for his life*, he must be hunted as a Partridge upon the Mountains: and afterwards, then he shall wear his Crown. Abraham, he had the promise of a numerous Progeny, as the Stars of Heaven, but before that, his Wives womb must be barren. Moses, he was to work deliverance for Israel, he was to be their temporal Saviour; before his hand wrought any Miracles, his hand must be Leprous. Christ he was to come into the World; there was the great Light of the World: I, but before that Light came, it was an hour of darkness to the Church of God. *Isa. 9. 2. Those that dwell in the shadow of death, to them hath the Light shined.* Before Gospel-deliverance, you must expect some sore pangs, and the reason of it is this; here is the reason; Because God hath a great deal of work yet to do; there is much rubbish to be removed, before Gods spiritual Temple will be built; sins must be brought lower; Superstition must

must be purg'd away ; the Devil must be cast out ; and will not this think you, cause great commotion in the Church ? and Convulsion-fits, before light springs up : Therefore, look for an hour of darkness.

But you will say to me, if it be so, then what shall we do in this hour of darkness ? how shall we behave our selves, till this Light doth spring up to the Church ? Let us do these three or four things, when it is an hour of darkness.

1. Let us get into our Chambers, there our great work is lies, between God and our own souls : go into your Chambers : *Isa. 26. 20. Come, my people, enter thou in to thy Chamber, hide thy self.* What Chamber, you will say, must we go into ?

First, Let us go into the Chamber of our own hearts, by meditation, and by Self-examination. Let us see how the case stands between God and our own Souls : let us prove our selves, whether we are in the Faith : let us be clearing our evidences every day : let us bring our graces to the touch-stone : let us never leave, till

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we have sound out, we have a Covenant-interest with God. When things are dark without, it is good that all should be clear within: that is one Chamber: we should go to our own hearts.

Secondly, Let us go into the Chamber of Divine promises, and, as it were, lock up our selves with God in these Chambers. Oh, the sweet promises that we should now go unto, and fly unto as a refuge; God hath promised, *He will never leave us, nor forsake us*. If you do not leave God, he will not leave you. God hath promised, *He will be our Sun and our shield*, *Psal. 84. 11*. In troublesome times he will be our shield, to defend us: he will be our Sun, to enlighten us, and comfort us. Let us hide ourselves, by Faith, in these Chambers: by the promises. That is the first work.

If an hour of Darkness be, go unto your Chambers.

Thirdly, Having done this, Let us commit our selves to God, and trust our selves upon his Providence *Psalms 45. 5*. *Commit thy way unto the Lord. Commit*

mit thy way to the Lord. In the *Hebrew* it is, *Root thy way upon the Lord*. Christians, let us not be too solicitous about issues and events of things: cast your burthen upon the Lord. So far as care is a duty, take it upon your selves: but so far as care is a burthen, cast it upon God.

Again, having done this, got into our Chambers, and rooted our wayes upon the Lord; trusting the issues of things with him: why then, in this hour of darkness, oh, wait with patience, till Light springs up to the Church; that is the great work, that now God calls to his people for: wait with patience, do not murmur, but wait: do not wait through unbelief; do not fret through impatience; but wait till Light springs up. It shall spring up in Gods due season: All the enemies of the Church shall not hinder Light springing up.

Deliverance is coming, when Gods time is come. We read, that when Christ was to rise out of the Grave; though there were a stone upon the

JOHN 16:16
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door of the Sepulchre, the Angel rowled away that stone, and Christ did arise gloriously. This seems, methinks, to be the time of the Churches Burial, and there seems to be a stone rowling over the Grave: but when the time of her Resurrection is come, God himself will rowl away the stone from the Sepulchre. *Cant.* 2. 8. It is spoken of Christ, *Behold, he comes leaping upon the Mountains, skipping upon the Hills.* My brethren, either Jesu Christ will remove the Mountains, or he will come leaping over them: he will deliver his people; and till then, let us wait. And that we may get into a waiting posture, consider these two or three things, and so I have done.

First, Our betters have waited; the Patriarchs of old, they waited, till mercy and light did spring up. Why, you know *Moses* he waited, and *Abraham*, he waited, and *Jacob*, he waited, *Gen.* 49. 18. Saith *Jacob*, *I have waited for thy Salvation, O Lord.* The people of *Israel*, they waited four hundred years for deliverance: and if they waited four hundred years, cannot we wait a few hours? *Se-*

Secondly, Wait till Light springs up for the Church: consider, we have a full God to wait upon: a Beggar is content to wait at a rich mans door, there is something still coming.

God hath treasures of mercy lying by; he hath more blessings to give, than one; we have a full God to wait upon, and shall not we wait? The Lord is not a sealed fountain, but he is a flowing fountain.

Thirdly, The mercies we are in expectation of, they are worthy waiting for; the mercies we have prayed for, and are in expectation of, they are worthy waiting for, to see the golden Fleet of Prayer coming home, with rich return; is not that worth waiting for?

To see the Lilly and the Rose united; I mean, Truth and Peace. To see wickedness discountenanced, and all its forces disbanded. To see the Beauty of Holiness shining in our Christal. To see Jesus Christ riding in Triumph, in the Chariots of his Gospel Administration. To see Righteousness exalted, and, like the Wings of a Dove, covered with Silver.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, Wait till Light springs up to the Church; consider this, the glorious Promises that are made to waiters, Isa. 30. 18. Blessed are all they that wait for him (A waiting condition is a blessed condition.) Isa. 49. 23. They shall not be ashamed that wait for him We account a mans Bond a very good Security: Those promises they are Gods bonds, and they have a double Seal set to them; the oath of God, and the blood of God: therefore let us wait patiently; let us wait chearfully, till Light doth spring up, and flourish unto a Harvest Deliverance.

F I N I S.

